

## The Consensus-Building Matrix

### General Information, Purpose and Directions

The *Consensus-Building Matrix* is a metric tool developed by Ray and Associates, Inc. for use in assisting our clients and other decision making groups in their efforts to select new school leaders. Our firm has continuously employed this device since 1975 to ensure objectivity in the selection process. As the name implies, the design of this instrument is to bring people together as they work to identify those candidates most qualified to fill targeted positions. This instrument is the heart of the selection process and serves as the springboard for the discussion which results in the identification of candidates to be interviewed, and later used again to reveal the top finalist(s). For over 35 years, hundreds of clients have used the matrix and found it to be extremely effective, often praising it for how well it quickly aided them in reaching decisions by consensus.

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Please do not put your name on the form. Upon completion, you will be given a randomly selected number that will serve to identify your form. Do not write in the cells at the bottom of the form.
2. Notice the names of the candidates at the bottom of the form. They are either in alphabetical order or, later in the order of their respective interviews (another matrix will need to be completed after all interviews to determine the finalist candidates). In both cases, the number that precedes their names identifies them at the top of the form. (Candidate 1 is identified by the numeral 1, Candidate 2 by the numeral 2, and so on.)
3. It is important you read each candidate's file that you have been provided. These are yours during the meeting, so put your initials on the front of each candidate's cover and feel free to take notes as you read, writing on the pages of the form if you choose to do so. All files will need to be returned to the consultant once the meeting has concluded.
4. Once you have become familiar with the candidates, it is time to make your decisions as to whom you prefer. This is a forced choice matrix, so you will need to compare each of the candidates to the other and decide which of the two you think better fits the profile of the position. This process calls for each individual to work independently, eliminating the need to "campaign" or advocate for any individual candidate.

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5. Look at the top row of what appears to be a line of fractions, i.e. 1 over 2, 1 over 3, 1 over 4, and so on. Remember, 1 stands for Candidate 1 on the bottom of the form, 2 stands for Candidate 2, etc. In each case you are to circle the number that corresponds to the candidate that you think is better suited for the position. In other words, circle the 1 if you prefer Candidate 1, or circle the 2 if you prefer Candidate 2. Proceed to make these choices, referring to the candidate files as necessary, for all the pairs on the page.

6. Many people that have used this instrument discovered it is very effective to do the first line which compares Candidate 1 to all the others. You may then set the file of Candidate 1 aside and do the next line which compares Candidate 2 to all the others. When finished with Candidate 2 line you may set that file aside and proceed in the same fashion until all lines have been completed.

7. There may be some instances at which you like both candidates, or where you like neither of them. *It is important, however, that you choose one of them in all cases.* Look into their files and find some distinguishing item no matter how small that allows you to choose. This will have little effect on the results when combined with the total data.

8. When finished, give your form to the consultant for scoring. You may watch as the consultant performs the scoring. Your form will then be returned to you as soon as your results are entered on the master score sheet.

9. When everyone has finished and all forms have been scored with the results entered on the master score sheet, the consultant will total these scores which are then expressed in points. These score totals will result in a ranking of the candidates, usually indicating a break between those candidates chosen most often and those chosen considerably less often.

10. The consultant will share these results in usually two ways. First, copies of the master score sheet will be made and distributed to all participants. Second, using a flip chart or the room's white board, the ranking of the candidates will be displayed. The ensuing discussion usually centers on those candidates that can be eliminated due to lower ranking and on those candidates that received the most points. The conclusion of the meeting occurs when the participants agree that they have identified the candidates best suited for the position and directs the consultant to contact these top candidates for the next step in the search process.